

Appl. No. 09/857,007  
Amendment in response to  
Office Action mailed 06/30/2004

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

**Claim 1** (previously presented): A parking meter, comprising:

- i) a microcontroller;
- ii) a timer coupled with the microcontroller;
- iii) payment acceptance means coupled with the microcontroller for accepting payment for use of an associated parking space, such that the microcontroller initiates the timer for a prepaid parking interval upon receiving a signal from the payment acceptance means;
- iv) vehicle detection means coupled with the microcontroller for detecting the presence or absence of a vehicle in the associated parking space;
- v) means for identifying a vehicle parked in the associated parking space, comprising an interrogation station coupled with the microcontroller, said interrogation station adapted to direct an interrogation signal, having a maximum range of approximately the length of the associated parking space or less, at the associated parking space in the area of the parking space where the license plate of a parked vehicle is located, receive a reply signal encoded with a vehicle identification code and to decode said signal, the microcontroller initiating the interrogation station to direct said interrogation signal at the associated parking space in the area of the parking space where the license plate of a parked vehicle is located upon determining the existence of a parking violation; and

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vi) digital storage means for storing said decoded vehicle identification code.

**Claim 2 (original):** The parking meter of claim 1 further comprising:

vii) telecommunications means coupled with said microcontroller, the microcontroller initiating a call notifying a remote monitoring station upon determining the existence of a parking violation and communicating said vehicle identification code.

**Claim 3 (original):** The parking meter of claim 2 wherein said telecommunications means is adapted to transmit said vehicle identification code to said authorities.

**Claim 4 (original):** The parking meter of claim 1 wherein said microcontroller comprises a microprocessor.

**Claim 5 (original):** The parking meter as defined in claim 1 wherein said vehicle detection means further comprises a digital camera which detects the presence of a vehicle.

**Claim 6 (original):** The parking meter as defined in claim 1 wherein said vehicle detection means comprises an ultrasonic, radar or infrared detector.

**Claim 7 (original):** The parking meter as defined in claim 2 wherein said telecommunications means comprises a modem.

**Claim 8 (original):** The parking meter as defined in claim 1, wherein the microcontroller initiates the timer for a predetermined standby interval upon receiving

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a signal from the vehicle detection means that a vehicle is present in the associated parking space, wherein said microcontroller is adapted to terminate the timing of the standby interval upon receiving a signal from the payment acceptance means, and said microcontroller initiates the interrogation station to direct an interrogation signal at the associated parking space in the area of the parking space where the license plate of a parked vehicle is located after expiry of said standby interval without receiving a signal from said payment acceptance means that a payment has been made.

**Claim 9 (original):** The parking meter as defined in claim 2, wherein the microcontroller initiates the timer for a predetermined standby interval upon receiving a signal from the vehicle detection means that a vehicle is present in the associated parking space, the microcontroller is adapted to terminate the timing of the standby interval upon receiving a signal from the payment acceptance means, and the microcontroller initiates a call to said remote monitoring station as to a parking violation after the expiration of the standby interval without receiving a signal from said payment acceptance means that a payment has been made.

**Claim 10 (original):** The parking meter as defined in claim 1, wherein the microcontroller determines the existence of a parking violation upon the vehicle detection means signalling to the microcontroller the presence of a vehicle in the associated parking space after expiry of said prepaid parking interval.

**Claim 11 (original):** The parking meter as defined in claim 2, wherein the microcontroller determines the existence of a parking violation upon the vehicle detection means signalling to the microcontroller the presence of a vehicle in the associated parking space after expiry of said prepaid parking interval.

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**Claim 12 (canceled)**

**Claim 13 (currently amended):** The parking meter as defined in claim 1 ~~further comprising wherein said vehicle detection means comprises~~ digital camera means coupled with the microcontroller and adapted to be focussed at the associated parking space in the area of the parking space where the licence plate of a parked vehicle is located, the microcontroller initiating the camera to take an image of a vehicle license plate upon determining the existence of a parking violation. ~~to obtain a digital image of the license plate.~~

**Claim 14 (previously presented):** The parking meter as defined in claim 1 wherein said vehicle detection means coupled with said microcontroller for detecting the presence or absence of a vehicle in the associated parking space comprises an in-pavement magnetic field sensor adapted to transmit a signal to said microcontroller upon detection of a vehicle in said associated parking space.

**Claim 15 (new):** A parking meter, comprising:

- i) a microcontroller;
- ii) a timer coupled with the microcontroller;
- iii) payment acceptance means coupled with the microcontroller for accepting payment for use of an associated parking space, such that the microcontroller initiates the timer for a prepaid parking interval upon receiving a signal from the payment acceptance means;
- iv) vehicle detection means comprising a digital camera coupled with the microcontroller for detecting the presence or absence of a vehicle in the associated parking space; and
- v) means for identifying a vehicle parked in the associated parking space,

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comprising digital camera means coupled with the microcontroller and adapted to be focussed at the associated parking space in the area of the parking space where the licence plate of a parked vehicle is located, the microcontroller initiating the camera to take an image of a vehicle license plate upon determining the existence of a parking violation.

**Claim 16 (new):** A parking meter, comprising:

- i) a microcontroller;
- ii) a timer coupled with the microcontroller;
- iii) payment acceptance means coupled with the microcontroller for accepting payment for use of an associated parking space, such that the microcontroller initiates the timer for a prepaid parking interval upon receiving a signal from the payment acceptance means;
- iv) vehicle detection means coupled with the microcontroller for detecting the presence or absence of a vehicle in the associated parking space;
- v) means for identifying a vehicle parked in the associated parking space, comprising an interrogation station coupled with the microcontroller, said interrogation station adapted to direct an interrogation signal at the associated parking space in the area of the parking space where the license plate of a parked vehicle is located, receive a reply signal having a maximum range of approximately the length of the associated parking space or less encoded with a vehicle identification code and to decode said signal, the microcontroller initiating the interrogation station to direct said interrogation signal at the associated parking space in the area of the parking space where the license plate of a parked vehicle is located upon determining the existence of a parking violation; and

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vi) digital storage means for storing said decoded vehicle identification code.